

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 IGA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 PC-04 RSR-01 /135 W

----- 074583

R 281230 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7951
INFO AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3580

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, BE, RW

SUBJECT: BELGIUM MAY WITHDRAW MILITARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
FROM RWANDA

1. SUMMARY: IF RWANDAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE TO BELGIAN PROPOSALS TO TAKE MEMBERS OF BELGIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TEAM OUT OF RWANDAN CHAIN OF COMMAND, EXEMPT THEM FROM GUARD AND WATCH OFFICER DUTY, AND ALLOW THEM TO WEAR DISTINGUISHING INSIGNIA, GOB WILL PHASE OUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BEGINNING END OF AUGUST 1973. END SUMMARY.

2. IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFFSS JUNE 27, FONOFF DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS LEBRUN REVIEWED PROBLEMS IN BELGIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN RWANDA. LEBRUN NOTED THAT AS RESULT OF VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES MINISTER OF DEFENSE HABYALIMANA HAD NOT MADE HIS LONG- POSTPONED VISIT TO BRUSSELS TO DISCUSS PROGRAM. ON MAY 13, THEREFORE, GOB SENT MEMORANDUM TO MIN COOPERATION MUNYANEZA AND DEFMIN OUTLINING BELGIAN PROPOSALS TO TAKE BELGIAN PERSONNEL OUT OF CHAIN OF COMMAND, REMOVE THEM FROM INVOLVEMENT IN GUARD
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AND WATCH OFFICER DUTY, AND PROVIDE THEM WITH SHOULDER PATCH DISTINGUISHING THEM AS MEMBERS OF ASSISTANCE TEAM. (LEBRUN SAID GOR HAD BLOCKED BELGIAN PLAN TO WITHDRAW OFFICERS AS TOURS EXPIRED. SEE APRIL 2 MEMCON OF COHEN VISIT.)

3. BECAUSE PROBLEM HAS DRAGGED ON FOR TWO YEARS AND BECAUSE NO REPLY RECEIVED TO MEMORANDUM, FONMIN VAN ELSLANDE SENT LETTER DATED JUNE 21 (TELEGRAPHED JUNE 25) TO MUNYANEZA. LETTER ANNOUNCES BELGIAN INTENTION TO WITHDRAW ALL MEMBERS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TEAM IN THREE PHASES BEGINNING AUGUST 1973 AND ENDING JUNE 1974. (FYI: ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE DRAWN UP BY BELGIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, SEVEN MEMBERS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN AT END OF AUGUST, SIX AT END DECEMBER, AND LAST THIRTEEN AT END JUNE. THREE HAVE ALREADY BEEN WITHDRAWN IN NORMAL TRANSFERS. END FYI.) LETTER ALSO NOTES THAT PROGRAMS OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MILITARY TRAINING AND SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WILL BE REVIEWED. LETTER DECLARES GOB WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS WITHDRAWAL WITH GOR.

4. FONOFF DOES NOT YET HAVE RWANDAN REACTION TO LETTER BUT RECEIVED THIS WEEK CABLE FROM BELGIAN EMBASSY REPORTING HABYALIMANA'S REACTION TO MAY 13 MEMORANDUM. ACCORDING TO REPORT HABYALIMANA WILLING TO ACCEPT ALL PROPOSALS IN MEMORANDUM EXCEPT REQUIREMENT FOR DISTINCTIVE PATCH. LEBRUN NOTED TO EMBOFFS THAT GOB WOULD BE FLEXIBLE ON ISSUE AND MIGHT SETTLE FOR BREAST POCKET NAME TAG WHICH ALSO IDENTIFIED WEARER AS MEMBER OF BELGIAN ASSISTANCE TEAM. IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT SOME SORT OF DISTINGUISHING ITEM BE WORN.

5. COMMENT: BELGIAN PATIENCE WITH RWANDAN RESISTANCE TO CHANGES IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP ALMOST WORN OUT, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF BELGIAN PARLIAMENTARY ATTENTION TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND FONOFF FEARS THAT MEMBERS OF BELGIAN ASSISTANCE TEAM MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED IN ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN RWANDA AND BURUNDI. GOB NOW TRYING SHOCK TREATMENT, GAMBLING THAT GOR WILL AGREE TO BELGIAN DEMANDS RATHER THAN TURN TO AID SOURCES THAT GOB WOULD REGARD AS UNDESIRABLE. STRAUSS- HUPE

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Errors: n/a
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30 JUN 2005

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